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# Newsroom: Yelnosky on Academic Hiring Quandry

Roger Williams University School of Law

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# ***Newsroom***

## **Yelnosky on Academic Hiring Quandry**

Professor Michael Yelnosky speaks to PBN (story teaser and photo above the fold on front page!) about a husband-wife hiring dispute at Brown University.

**From PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS:** "Academic hires often come in pairs" by Rebecca Keister, PBN

Staff Writer



**September 10, 2012:** Beverly Haviland, a senior lecturer and visiting associate professor in Brown University's American Studies department, holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Princeton University.

Before coming to Providence, she was a tenured professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and, before that, at Vassar College.

Well-published with a long list of awards on her research page on Brown's website, she is, by all measures, an accomplished academic.

But what she wants is to be treated like a tenured professor at Brown. It's a promise she said the university made to her when she was hired as part of a package deal with her husband, Paul Armstrong, who was hired as dean of the college in 2001, and did not deliver.

"I think [such a hiring] is a fairly unique aspect of academic employment," **said Michael Yelnosky, a professor of law at Roger Williams University School of Law in Bristol.** "I [also] think it's not uncommon for some people to say, 'This is opening up a bad can of worms, and we just shouldn't do it.' "

Haviland sued Brown University in 2005 for breach of employment contract and for the right to be reviewed as a tenured professor would. In July, the R.I. Supreme Court ruled in Haviland's favor, meaning she now has job protection similar to that of a tenured professor.

"It's a cautionary tale, but these two [Brown professors] did it right," **Yelnosky said.** "I read a lot of employment law cases from lots of jurisdictions, and I teach the subject. These people did much more and got much more [in writing] than most plaintiffs in employment wrongful-discharge [cases] get."

Brown University, according to legal documents, recruited Armstrong in 2000 when he was a dean at Stony Brook and Haviland was a tenured professor of comparative studies there.

Armstrong made it clear that he wouldn't go to Brown unless they could find a tenured position for Haviland.

After originally saying they couldn't do that, the university created a position for Haviland as a visiting professor and said in writing it would allow her to be reviewed in the same manner as a tenured professor facing nonrenewal.

In short, Haviland wouldn't be a tenured professor but she would be held to the same benefits and standards, including job security, as a tenured faculty member.

For full story, click [here](http://www.pbn.com/detail.html?sub_id=6822d3415603). [http://www.pbn.com/detail.html?sub\_id=6822d3415603]